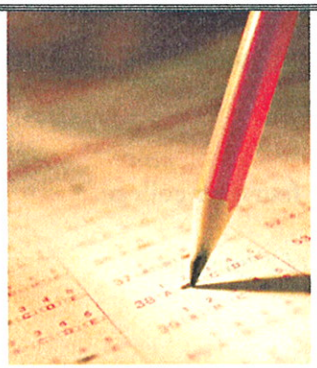

WASHINGTON LEARNS
K-12 and Higher Education Advisory Committees

Presentations – *Transitions*

September 14, 2005

Program Title:

Bremerton High School/Olympic College – High School Junior Assessment Project

Briefly describe your program:

The goals of the partnership between Bremerton High School and Olympic College are as follows:

1. To increase the number of high school seniors prepared for entry into college level mathematics and English.
2. To reveal college readiness mathematics and English gaps to students, and
3. To influence students' senior year registration decisions.

The project was piloted in the Bremerton School District during the 2003-2004 school year, involving 42 Bremerton High School juniors. During the 2004-2005 school year, the project was expanded to all high schools in the Kitsap Peninsula, involving 135 Bremerton High School juniors and approximately 500 students from all participating districts. As part of the partnership, juniors in regional high schools were administered the COMPASS during their junior year of high school and provided post-assessment debriefing/counseling by Olympic College educational advisors. Data gathered to support the project include: (1) student perception of college readiness, (2) COMPASS measures of college readiness, and (3) students' course selections during both their high school senior year and first year enrollment in community college.

Barriers:

The original pilot for Bremerton High School was procedurally efficient, given the size of the sample and the physical location of the high school, which borders Olympic College. How to deliver the project to multiple high schools within Kitsap and Mason counties became a logistical challenge. The expanded scale was solved by working in collaboration among partners. Location challenges were solved by leveraging technologies to allow the college to configure high school computer labs as college placement testing centers. College staff partnered with high school staff to deliver the test, review placement results, and discuss "gap-closing" options with students. Availability of key staff at both the district and college level challenged project delivery. As this project continues to expand and serve greater numbers of students, the availability of key staff will need to be addressed. Given academic calendars, scheduling testing and post-testing advising to match available resources remains a major barrier to continued project expansion.

Measures of success:

Measures of effectiveness include comparing student perceptions of readiness with quantitative COMPASS results, changes in course selection in students' senior year based on junior year data, subsequent enrollment in college level courses, and grades obtained in math and higher-level English courses in both high school and college. Longitudinal data related to course choices in college is in the process of being collected and analyzed.

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2003-2004

In general, data from the Bremerton pilot indicated that student perceptions of readiness in general did not align with readiness scores.

- Only 7% of students had both parents with a Bachelor of Arts or higher education.
- Eighty-three percent (83%) of students indicated a preference to attend either a two or four-year college.
- Only 17% of the students qualified for college level algebra or higher.
- Based on these data, 50% of the participants enrolled in a math class their senior year of high school.

2004-2005

Five hundred thirty-one (531) students from the Kitsap Peninsula participated in 2004-2005.

- Sixty-three percent (63%) of students were *First Generation*, meaning neither parent has a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Eighty-one percent (81%) of students intended to go to college after high school.
- Eighty-six (86%) felt prepared or somewhat prepared for college level English courses, but only 43% were actually ready for college level English, as measured by COMPASS.
- Sixty-six percent (66%) of students felt prepared or somewhat prepared for college level math, but only 22% were actually ready for college ready math, as measured by COMPASS.
- Thirty-five percent (35%) of students said nobody helps them choose their high school courses.
- In the Bremerton School District pilot, attitudes about math changed during the course of the assessment. In the Bremerton School District, 56% of the students who were not currently enrolled in math enrolled in a math class during their senior year based on their testing experience. Of these, most (96%) enrolled in Calculus, Math Analysis, or Advanced Algebra.

Policies:

To facilitate the project, interlocal agreements and/or licensing agreements need to be developed to enable COMPASS testing and interpretation on site at high schools. In addition to the logistics of the test administration, it is imperative that either community college and/or high school staff be trained and skilled in dialoging results with students and parents.

A second policy implication would be the possibility of requiring that community college students have college placement testing and advising early in their junior year of high school. Additionally, incentives to encourage student participation should be considered. For example, students who participate in college readiness projects and who reduce their need for college entry remediation may receive tuition credit or "college readiness" scholarships. In addition, these data provided community colleges better information to project course needs.

Finally, if high schools are to meet the goal to increase the percentage of high school graduates prepared for college level math and English, interventions will need to be initiated prior to the junior year. The Bremerton School District utilized the math and English student achievement gap data to design early interventions, initiate accelerated learning, and design tutorial classes in math and English. Students are assigned to specialized classes and exited based on performance data aligned with State standards in grades 6-12.

What does it cost?:

The material cost for placement test is $15.00 per student. This year's project received $15,000 as one of five pilot projects funded by the Transition Math Project. Planning and administration of the project involves assigning substantial numbers of staff to each testing site by both local teams (comprised of high school Information Technology and counseling staff) and their counterparts from Olympic College. As an add-on responsibility for most project staff, it is difficult to determine exactly what costs have been incurred. Even so, it is clear that as this activity continues to grow, and as other college readiness interventions are developed, staff support will need to be addressed. There is a clear need – 35% of these students said nobody helps them select their courses – a finding relatively consistent at both the high school and college levels.

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